

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: August 18, 2011

Agenda Item: Proposed acquisition of additional Milltown land parcels. _____

Division: Parks

Action Needed:

____ **Approval of Tentative Rule** ☒ **Approval of Final Rule/Action**

____ **Endorse Course of Action** _____ **None - information only**

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 15 min _____

Background

Montana State Parks proposes to accept the transfer of three parcels of land totaling approximately 465 acres to develop a State Park at the current Milltown Superfund Site at the Confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot Rivers in Missoula County. For the last eight years, a broad-based citizens' group, the Milltown Superfund Redevelopment Working Group, has collaborated with Montana State Parks to develop a conceptual design plan for the park. Montana State Parks' acceptance of the land would fulfill the long-standing community expectation of public ownership for the Milltown Superfund site and the restored confluence.

Montana State Parks would accept three parcels, two currently owned by the State of Montana and third from a local land trust. **Parcel A** is the former Northwestern Energy property (approximately 416 acres). As a result of the Superfund cleanup, it was acquired by the State of Montana in December of 2010 and includes the reconstructed floodplain of the Clark Fork River as well as the lower Blackfoot River. The area is managed by the State's Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP). **Parcel B**, the Milltown Bluff property (approximately 13.6 acres), is located on the south side of the Clark Fork River above the former dam site. The land was acquired by the State of Montana in February 2011 and is currently managed by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). **Parcel C** is the Jacobs property (approximately 35 acres) located to the east of Deer Creek County Road. In 2010, Five Valleys Land Trust (FVLT) purchased the parcel to provide a critical access point and trail link. FVLT would donate the land to Montana State Parks for inclusion in the park.

Future development of park facilities on these parcels would be described in subsequent Environmental Assessments.

Public Involvement Process & Results

At its June 2011 meeting, the FWP Commission tentatively approved the acquisition. An Environmental Assessment was released for public comment on June 24 and the comment period ended on July 25. Seventeen comments were received; 16 of them supported the acquisition and one comment, from the Missoula Office of Planning and Grants, clarified current zoning of the parcels. Public comment is summarized and responded to in the Decision Notice, which was released July 30.

Alternatives and Analysis No Action Alternative:

Montana State Parks would not accept the land and the agency would not proceed with park development at Milltown. Properties owned by the State of Montana would remain under the management of the NRDP and DEQ, or other agency. Five Valleys Land Trust would likely pursue another buyer for the Jacobs property who may not allow public access.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Montana State Parks recommends approval by the Commission to acquire approximately 465 acres for the development of the Milltown State Park.

Proposed Motion

"I move that the Department proceed with the acquisition of the parcels A, B, and C for inclusion in the Milltown State Park."